VOX POP

05.07.2006 ISSUE 17

Mothers in flux, page 10 *Da Vinci Code* Overload, page 14

VOX POP

MARS HILL CHURCH

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May 07, 2006

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Write to Vox Pop
Email voxpop@marshillchurch.org with your ideas, rants, and reactions.

A Welcome To First-time Readers

Vox Pop is the "Voice of the People" known as Mars Hill Church. Mars Hill is a church based in the greater Seattle area. Weekly Sundays gatherings are in Shoreline and Ballard, and events, activities and small groups meet throughout the week. If you visit us on a Sunday, stop by any Information Desk for a casual introduction to our church community. For more information, teaching, music, and more visit our website at www.marshillchurch.org. If you have additional questions, email voxpop@marshillchurch.org.

Because We Can't, We Won't, And We Don't Stop

Following the Great Commission into West Seattle, Mars Hill Church's multi-site mission continues to expand

Real estate in Seattle doesn't come cheap. But sometimes it comes free.

With the inception of Mars Hill Shoreline last January, the church's great multi-site expansion project is less than a year old. This new experiment, however, has not only proved to be a great success, but also an encouraging example of God's provision.

Thanks to the generosity of CRISTA Ministries, Mars Hill Shoreline occupies Schirmer Auditorium rent-free. And now, with the cooperation of Doxa Church, Mars Hill has received more than forty thousand square feet of free real estate in West Seattle.

Last month, Pastor Mark Driscoll wrote a letter to the members of Mars Hill Church to make the announcement, adapted here for Vox Pop:

Mars Hill Roots

I grew up in southwest Seattle as the oldest of five Catholic children to a blue-collar construction worker dad who now attends Mars Hill along with my mom.

The first ten years of my life were spent living on the border between White Center and Burien and attending St. Bernadette's Catholic school in White Center. I spent most of my time riding my bike to White Center to play baseball with my friends. My summers were spent in West Seattle at the Arbor Heights swimming pool with friends. I also spent a lot of time playing baseball in West Seattle at High Point and Lincoln Park.

Eventually, my family moved to SeaTac, I got my driver's license, and I spent a lot of summers cruising Alki before they outlawed cruising. I was student body president at Highline High School in South Seattle in 1989. I even proposed to my high school sweetheart on Alki beach a few years later.

God saved me in college (at WSU) and called me to return to Seattle to plant Mars Hill Church. I married Grace in college at the age of twenty-one, moved back to Seattle at the age of twenty-two, and then, at the age of twenty-three, began a small evening service for young people at the Trinity Church in South Seattle where my father-in-law has been the pastor for more than forty years. When I was twenty-five I began gathering the core for Mars Hill and felt strongly called to plant the church in West Seattle because of my heart for South and West Seattle.

I asked a dying church with a large building there if we could plant Mars Hill in their building. I also spent some Sundays preaching to their small congregation in an effort to win their approval. Additionally, we held some outreach events in the community for students in the building and we saw some people give their lives to Jesus. In the end, however, the church chose not to allow us to use the building to plant Mars Hill.

So, I moved the core group meetings for Mars Hill closer to the University of Washington. A church near the campus was willing to house us, which was convenient for the base of college students I had gathered. Before leaving the church building I desperately wanted in West Seattle, I spent a few hours on my knees in prayer at the front of the stage, asking God to bring a church planter to make use of the building as I had a deep burden to see it used well for the gospel in West Seattle.

The Doxa Years

Some years later I met Pastor Bill Clem and was excited to hear of his plan to plant a church in the building I had prayed for in West Seattle. He had formerly led The Inn at Western Washington University and did a great deal of training for youth pastors across the nation with Sonlife ministries. Additionally, his very sweet daughter was a member of Mars Hill Church while attending Seattle Pacific University. I was thrilled to see such a great church building in the hands of a godly man. Shortly thereafter Pastor Clem and Doxa Church joined our Acts 29 Church Planting Network and monies were made available to help pay his salary for a few years.

(continued: SEE 'West Seattle' page 4)

NEWS

"How Jesus Changed Me"

On March 29, Forty-two people were baptized at Mars Hill: Ballard. To prepare for this event, each individual was asked to write their story. Here are three accounts of the grace, power, and faithfulness of Jesus Christ.

Sara Ayoubi, *Age 25*

I remember from a very early age feeling a sense of isolation in Islam. I remember long treks in the snow with my family from our house to the local mosque. Once inside, I had to put my *hijab* on and go upstairs to the loft area where the women prayed, separated from the men. At this age of six or seven, I was already a pretty rebellious kid and I would always try to pull the *hijab* away from my head and peer down the railing–wondering why we had to be separated.

After a few colorful teen years, I found myself in Seattle. I was away from my parents and isolated from all my friends and had to make all my decisions on my own. It was then that I met someone that introduced me to Jesus, not just "God." I was very resistant. The first time I came to Mars Hill, I was completely taken aback by the scene, so I attended a different church for the next ten months. And then the Lord finally opened my eyes and my heart when I returned and listened to one of Pastor Mark's sermons about Christ on the Cross. I found myself identifying with everything he was saying.

By the end of the sermon I was wrecked and completely convicted. With tears in my eyes, I went to the front desk and asked for a copy of the Bible. I then went to my car and cried like I had never cried before, literally crying from the depths of my soul. All the while I kept thinking "Oh crap, I am a Christian."

I knew that my tears were of joy but also of pain because I knew that I was going to face my family who would not accept my decision because being Afghan and Muslim is so cultural. Regardless, I believe that the Lord provides and that my hope comes from Him, our Lord, Jesus Christ.

I then went to my car and cried like I had never cried before, literally crying from the depths of my soul. All the while I kept thinking "Oh crap, I am a Christian."

Kaitlin Omundson, *Age 20*

The name Jesus was never a mystery to me. I was unknowingly blessed with a Jesus-loving family and surrounded by Jesus-loving friends. But circumstances do not cause you to have a relationship with Jesus. I was diagnosed with clinical depression at age twelve and spent a good amount of time drugged up on Zoloft. The only way I can describe it is that my mind was this black tomb where voices whispered sweet sounding lies to me–such as Jesus did not love me so I was damned to Hell–that I should just kill myself, end it now.

Photo by Lynne Parker

Shortly after his own baptism, Michael Seggelink baptized his wife, Thalia, with Pastor Phil Smidt.

I obsessed my time with dance and ballet. I was quite successful at it. And through God's plan I moved to Seattle to dance ballet here, but in my mind I was still trapped in this tomb. I tried finding light in alcohol, pill-popping, relationships, sex, cutting myself, and even suicide. I cannot explain what brought me to Mars Hill. I was so lost and Jesus led my stumbling self here. I stumbled home.

This amazing relationship with Jesus Christ began to grow. He became this shining light in my tomb. Jesus shown light on all the blessings I had in my life. Now I have a wonderful church family, I am clean, I am getting married to a beautiful Jesus-loving man, and the list goes on and on. I just praise Jesus and thank Him daily for His wonderful, profound grace that saved me.

My blood was boiling, my back was tensing up. It was that moment that God chose to speak to me, saying, "Why won't you let Jesus Christ into your heart?"

Kermit Williams, *Age 46*

I grew up in a household that wasn't Christian or even religious. Before I came to Mars Hill, I think I had attended church maybe a dozen times in my life. Overall, my opinion was that God was an idea people made up in order to prove that their group was better than somebody else's. I thought that Christianity consisted of reasons to be embarrassed about who you weren't and what you didn't know.

It turns out that in my life I have been good at defying things, constantly working to prove that I am right. This is an act that has worked pretty well at distracting people away from a big, fat, hole of loneliness in my heart that could be pierced by the littlest things–an insult, a sprained ankle, a bad haircut, or a missed bus. Once wounded, I would bleed with anger as I proceeded to lie, cheat, steal, and otherwise try to hurt people. I felt that if other people saw what I did as being selfish, greedy, or malicious, that was because they

(continued: SEE 'Baptism' page 9)

mars hill **may**

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05.09– **tues, wed, thurs – ballard**
05.11 reform & resurge conference
No regular Wednesday programming 5/10

05.12 **fri, 6–10pm – ballard**
Proxy movie night: King Kong

05.13 **sat – thrill zone (tacoma), 9–11am**
Coalition Skate. Free. Email Micah Carioto: **setapart81@hotmail.com**

05.13 **sat, 6pm – ballard**
artist reception

05.19– **fri, sat, sun – warm beach**
05.21 men's training camp

05.26 **fri, 6:45pm – ballard**
Film & Theology: Serenity

weekly this season

sunday services (times change 6/4)
ballard – 1401 NW Leary Way
8:30am, 10:30am, 12:30pm, 5pm, 7pm
(no children's ministry during the 7pm)

shoreline – schirmer auditorium (crista ministries campus), Greenwood Ave N and N 195th St
9:45am and 11:45am

gospel class
Sundays at 2pm at Mars Hill: Shoreline
Wednesdays at 6:45pm at Mars Hill: Ballard.
Take this class to learn more about Christianity and Mars Hill. Register at www.marshillchurch.org

capstone institute
Wed. at 6:45pm & Sun. at 2:30pm (Ballard)
Capstone offers Mars Hill members the opportunity to take a variety theology classes for free. June's lecture series is open to members & non-members (see p. 19)

proxy
Wednesdays at 6:45pm in the Paradox.
High school and junior high students are invited for worship, testimony, teaching, and prayer.

jericho junction
Wednesdays at 6:45pm (Ballard)
For kids age ten and under. Teaching the Word of God through drama and puppets

recovery & grace groups
If you're struggling with addiction, substance abuse, homosexuality, infertility, post-abortion trauma, childhood abuse...email *recovery@marshillchurch.org.*

NEWS

Wondering Westward

Pastor Mark answers questions about Mars Hill Church's newest site in West Seattle

Where will Mars Hill West Seattle be?

The address is 7551 35th Avenue SW, Seattle, WA 98126. It is roughly 11.3 miles from Mars Hill Ballard and 20.4 miles from Mars Hill Shoreline. The building is on the south end of West Seattle toward White Center and Burien.

How big is the building?

The church building is just over forty thousand square feet, all of which is currently in use as a church with the exception of a northern building (of eight thousand square feet) that is quite old and needs renovation or replacement. The main sanctuary seats roughly thirteen hundred people in pews and there are three older sanctuaries also in the building that seat two to three hundred people each.

What is the building like?

Externally, the building is an older brick church. Internally, it has a nice café for hosting meals and concerts, far more class and office space than Mars Hill Ballard, a small gymnasium, and the cool vibe of an old church. The main sanctuary has sloped seating, old wooden pews, a high ceiling, and a large balcony. The church needs some additional improvements but is owned free and clear and is therefore a prudent investment.

How many Mars Hill people live in the area?

Mars Hill Church currently has about six hundred people that we can identify who come from West Seattle through Burien and Normandy Park and will be likely to attend a service in West Seattle. An unknown number of people who attend Mars Hill from the area have not yet become members or filled out a visitor card and we are therefore unable to track them.

We also have a few staff members who live in West Seattle and a few more who are in the process of purchasing homes there. Also, because I graduated as the Student Body President of Highline High School and was well connected through the area, the combination of my roots and the reputation of Mars Hill may help to draw additional people to serve and fund the mission to West Seattle.

What will happen to the members of Doxa Church?

They will be encouraged to take the Mars Hill Gospel Class in West Seattle and become members of Mars Hill. Our full intent is to make this a loving community of missionaries from both Doxa and Mars Hill laboring together as one church on one mission.

Photo by Lynne Parker

What will happen to Pastor Clem?

He and the other elders at the church will be encouraged to complete the Mars Hill elder process and be Mars Hill elders. Pastor Clem will be given a sabbatical to enjoy his wife and rest up before resuming full-time ministry responsibilities.

When will these transitions ideally take place?

This summer we will begin the Mars Hill Gospel Class in West Seattle to get to know the people in Doxa Church and welcome them into Mars Hill Church membership. The hope will be to have some further building renovations done over the summer in time for a big fall launch of Mars Hill West Seattle in conjunction with our ten year anniversary. So, the spring and summer will be used to work out the details, allow people from Mars Hill and Doxa to grow in loving community, and prepare for a big grand opening in the fall.

Why is this a win-win for both Mars Hill and Doxa?

Mars Hill benefits from some godly Christians with a heart for South and West Seattle, some gifted leaders, and the gift of a building worth a few million dollars that is grandfathered in as a church (enabling us to use it immediately and not have to meet any zoning requirements). This saves us roughly a year of time and literally hundreds of thousands of dollars. It also allows those Mars Hill people who commute in from West and South Seattle to attend church closer to home and be on mission where they live more effectively.

Doxa Church could benefit from the various resources Mars Hill provides for the mission of reaching West Seattle. Both churches are part of the Acts 29 Church Planting Network which means that there is no major distinction in theology, which makes it much easier to work together to achieve our common goal: both churches want to see more people reached for Jesus in South and West Seattle. This partnership enables that to happen most effectively.

West Seattle

(continued from page 2)

Since that time, Doxa Church has been planted and is running just under two hundred people a week. Also, a great deal of work has been done on the West Seattle building because it was in need of major renovation. However, Pastor Clem's wife has been battling cancer for the past four years and though she is thankfully in remission, his family and church have obviously had a great burden to bear as they were renovating a building, planting a church, helping plant other churches, and watching their pastor and his wife struggle with cancer.

40,000 sq ft of Providence

Meanwhile, Mars Hill Church has yet again outgrown another building and shows no sign of slowing down. To help accommodate our rapid growth, we launched our first additional site in Shoreline in January, which has been wildly more successful than we expected and opened a future for Mars Hill in multiple sites scattered throughout the Puget Sound.

We also purchased a large warehouse in Ballard one block away from the current Mars Hill Ballard location and began raising money for renovations to that space, but the permitting process has been stretched out until possibly the fall. In addition, our parking arrangements have stalled; needless to say the project has been greatly slowed down. So, while we have not abandoned the second Mars Hill Ballard site, it has been tabled, as renovations cannot begin until permits are issued.

However, it seems that our sovereign God had been slowing down our opening of the second Mars Hill Ballard location because He had other plans He had not yet disclosed to us. After some weeks of discussions and meetings with Pastor Clem and the leaders of Doxa Church, we have arrived at an amazingly exciting agreement that we are now working to legally arrange and practically implement.

They have agreed to partner with Mars Hill Church to open Mars Hill West Seattle in the fall of 2006 in conjunction with our ten-year anniversary. The basic detail is that Doxa Church will be legally absorbed by Mars Hill Church. This means that we will be receiving their West Seattle church facility, which is roughly the same size and the same number of seats as Mars Hill Ballard, free of charge, along with their leaders and church members who are willing to roll into Mars Hill.

Obviously, there are innumerable details to be worked out and we don't have all the answers. What we do have is an opportunity to see more people worship Jesus, which is what truly matters. In the coming weeks and months far more will be decided and made known. Until that time I would sincerely ask everyone to be in prayer as we undertake an enormous ministry opportunity in one of America's least churched cities. For those wanting to help out please just be patient as we put this all together.

Head 'Em Up and Move 'Em Out

Pastor Bubba saddles up for West Seattle

Photos by Lynne Parker

The many sides of the newest Mars Hill. Though the present Doxa facilities are about the same size as our Ballard building, the layout is very different. For starters, the future Mars Hill West Seattle is really three connected structures—built and re-built over the years.

In the past year, Bubba Jennings became a Mars Hill pastor, saw his wife, Shelly, give birth to their first child, and was put in charge of the church's newest site: Mars Hill West Seattle. Recently, Vox Pop asked Pastor Bubba…

Vox Pop: *What is your role in developing Mars Hill West Seattle?*

Pastor Bubba: I will be the West Seattle site pastor. This means I am responsible for carrying out all the operations of Mars Hill's mission in West Seattle.

VP: *What is the timeline for this project?*

PB: We've already started work. We will be doing a pretty major renovation to the West Seattle facility this summer and launch the site October 2006. This will be just in time to celebrate Mars Hill's ten year anniversary.

VP: *What's the general feeling at Doxa Church about all of these changes? I mean, they're donating their building, congregation, and leadership to Mars Hill. Pretty incredible.*

PB: The folks at Doxa are awesome. They are welcoming us with open arms. So far everyone I've talked to is very excited about the changes happening. Their passion is to help the mission of Jesus reach West Seattle and they understand this will be best accomplished by Doxa becoming part of Mars Hill.

VP: *What sort of collaborative efforts are in the works to unite our two congregations?*

PB: Once Doxa ceases to exist as a legal entity, [at the end of April] Mars Hill Church will take legal ownership of the West Seattle building and all the wonderful folks in West Seattle will have the opportunity to go through the Gospel Class, which Mars Hill pastors will teach on Sunday mornings. Everyone who is on mission with Mars Hill will become a Mars Hill member, uniting the two congregations.

VP: *How is this project different than Mars Hill: Shoreline? What have we learned from five months of operating as a multi-site church?*

PB: Probably the biggest difference is that the West Seattle site will be a facility which we own and can use all the time. By operating Shoreline, the multi-site concept has proven to work for Mars Hill. This is wonderful because there is a huge need for Mars Hill to reach not only Seattle, but also branch out into other areas, enabling us to reach more people. The Mars Hill elders are very excited about the site concept and believe it is going to be very effective for our mission.

VP: *When you walk around the West Seattle facilities, envisioning the future of Mars Hill, what makes you most excited?*

PB: West Seattle will have about a thousand seats for Sunday services. I am excited about filling all those seats with people who don't yet know and love Jesus. I'm most excited for lots and lots of people to meet Jesus and know the power of His saving grace. There is a great need in West Seattle for a church that loves Jesus. My hope is that Mars Hill West Seattle will be a people that passionately love Jesus and each other. Every Christian is a missionary called to serve and love the people in their sphere of influence. Mars Hill West Seattle will be a people on mission.

VP: *What happens between now and fall?*

PB: There is a ton of work to be done in West Seattle. We need folks in the West Seattle area who love Jesus to step up and get involved in the amazing work He is doing there. Seriously, if you are reading this and feel God calling you to help, don't ignore His calling. Get involved! Email westseattle@marshillchurch.org.

Love Your Neighborhood

Backyard Bible Club thrills kids, serves community

By Mark Bergin

There are days in the dead of summer when the lure of community pools and ball fields runs dry, when hoards of neighborhood kids dangle from living room furniture and pronounce with maddening narcissism, "I'm bored." Mothers live to prevent such moments, filling the long daylight hours with all manner of sports and field trips.

So why not Backyard Bible Club? Why not take advantage of a free opportunity to drop the four to ten-year-old little ones at the home of a trusted neighbor for two-plus hours of gaming, snacking, crafting, singing–and yes, Bible study?

Some may balk at the invitation for misguided fear of Christianity. But no worries, others will come. Joan Nieman, who helped with Mars Hill's inaugural foray into the community outreach last year, calls the BYBC "a natural extension of a neighborhood friendship. In the summer, mothers are a little bit more open to just keep their kids busy. And if it happens to be Christian, well, maybe it doesn't matter."

> "We really want them to reach out to people they live around—get to know those families better and develop those relationships." –Tami Mckinley, Children's Ministry deacon

Kids with a Mission

Of course, the BYBC does not just happen to be Christian. It is adapted strategically from a pre-existing Vacation Bible School curriculum and designed to litter every activity with the goodness of Jesus. Handpicking the VBS program that most explicitly and consistently names Jesus, volunteers at Canyon Hills Community Church in Bothell then purchase the copyrights, make all necessary changes to fit the week-long event into a typical home, and provide the materials to a number of participating Seattle-area churches.

Mars Hill members Maggie Bolliger and Brandal and Tahoma Gehr opened their shared home a year ago to host a number of church kids. This year, with an added measure of experience and familiarity, they'll aim for the unchurched as well. Mars Hill Children's Ministry pastor Dick McKinley hopes to secure as many as five to ten host homes, pitching the idea to community groups as a vehicle for befriending neighbors. "We really want them to reach out to people they live around–get to know those families better and develop those relationships," says Tami Mckinley.

Here Comes the Neighborhood

To emphasize the focus on neighborhood outreach, BYBC materials come complete with door hangers and invitations. The five-day event, slated for July 10–14, encourages hosts to invite the parents to a Thursday evening barbeque or ice cream social. Tami hopes that "if they're willing to come to that, they may be interested in coming to the community group. Form there, it's going to prepare them to want to come to our church."

So who should host such an event? And do they need a backyard acre to do it?

The BYBC is built for flexibility in hopes of accommodating most every willing participant. Hosts are free to choose what number of children would best work for the space available. Those with unusable backyards are free to move indoors. Those with antique-lined living rooms are free to lock the doors.

Canyon Hills holds its events during midday hours, placing the bulk of responsibility with stay-at-home moms. But Mars Hill will afford each individual host the chance to choose the best time of day according to personal schedule–even allowing hosts to select an alternate week if necessary. "If somebody has the heart to do it, they automatically make it work," Tami said.

Fun at Treasure Cove

A love for kids should resonate at the center of such willing hearts. More than a strategic mechanism for community outreach, the BYBC is a memorable blast for little ones. Joan recalls an atmosphere that was "fun, low-key and nothing like school at all." Her nine-year-old daughter Charlotte participated last year and is ready for another go-round. "It's really fun," she said. "You can learn about Jesus and have a lot of fun, too."

This year's "Treasure Cove" theme will send the kids on a daily search for clues, digging into Scripture and backyard foliage to ultimately discover the greatest treasure of all–Jesus, of course. The program calls for elaborate decorations, planning and training–all of which Canyon Hills provides. Hosts must attend an orientation presentation May 20 and then join all other volunteers for more specific training June 10. The commitment is considerable, the payoff immeasurable. "The kids are kind of amazed at the transformation that goes on and are kind of impressed that so much has been done for them," Joan said. "Kids don't need much to use their imagination, and the people that design this program are amazing."

Just Add Kids

Mars Hill hosts and volunteers will have opportunities to pop in on Canyon Hills clubs in late June. Such a visual aid should help alleviate uncertainty and nail down precisely what

(continued: SEE 'Backyard Bible Club' page 9)

Calling All Leaders, Hosts, Apprentices, and Coaches

This fall, Mars Hill, will have the largest gathering of leaders in our history: a 24-hour "Community Group Leadership Intensive." Everyone involved in Community Group leadership–pastors, coaches, leaders, apprentices, and hosts–is encouraged to join us on Friday and Saturday, August 25-26. The festivities will start at 5pm on Friday and end at 6pm on Saturday. Pastor Mark Driscoll will be on hand to share how Community Groups are an essential and indispensable strategy for bringing the Gospel to Seattle. We will worship with Team Strike Force, brainstorm with other leaders through hands-on, experiential break-out sessions, and have a great time learning from Jesus and each other.

The Community Group ministry is at the heart of what Mars Hill Church is all about: to connect and grow authentic relationships with Jesus Christ among a few brothers and sisters and with our non-Christian neighbors. Community Groups–meeting all over and around the city–not only provide opportunities to discuss the Scriptures, but also stimulate accountability, fellowship, leadership training, spiritual growth, and outreach in the context of an inviting living room atmosphere.

To Register:

Go to www.marshillchurch.org. Sign up before May 31st and receive a discount. If you are involved in any aspect of the Community Group ministry, we want you to share this experience with us. If you have any questions or would like to be involved, email augustconference@marshillchurch.org.

NEWS

Film, Faith, and Justice Forum

What did we learn?

By Kyle Isaacson

Note: Last month's Vox Pop previewed The Other Journal's "Film, Faith, and Justice Forum," which took place at SPU April 7-9. The following is a recap of the event.

How does one remain loyal to both forgiveness and justice?

How radical is Christ's forgiveness and reconciliation?

How does service differ from servitude?

How does capitalism affect the Christian worldview?

What are the effects of capitalism on the world economy and how does Christian theology respond?

What is the Church's role in democracy?

A battery of endless inquiries challenging my daily assumptions about life in the United States and as a world citizen rattled across my forehead like text on a typewriter. The Other Journal's presentation of the Film, Faith, and Justice Forum hosted by Seattle Pacific University raised many questions, to say the least.

The Forum opened on a Friday evening with two films and a dialogue about war and violence. The event continued through Sunday with three more discussion blocks and six more films on forgiveness, suffering, the economy, and politics.

During the discussion segments, the films (all from the Human Rights Watch International Film Festival) usually introduced the topic and were followed by either a panel discussion or an informative lecture by a well-credentialed speaker. Panels fielded questions from the audiences, helping to foster one of the main thematic veins of the weekend: get involved. The Forum's milieu bled outside the main auditorium, where booths and flyers promoted organizations concerned with relevant topics ("Invisible Children," for example).

To say the Film, Faith, and Justice Forum was informative would be to say that libraries have books. Presenters tackled the issues of theology and social justice with proficiency, depth, and passion.

In the end all those involved, despite their wealth of knowledge, wisdom, and insight, displayed humility enough to avoid proposing all the pithy, warm-blanket answers that conclude many like events. The problems of humanity require more than a cover-up with the thin fleece of idealism. But the world is never too cold for the gloves and mittens of hope that allow the hands of God's people to continue His work.

Rather than easy answers, the Forum sought to give voice to those who have experienced violence—physical, emotional, economic, etc—as a means to rupture ignorance, particularly within the Christian community. This was accomplished through the art of story. The story of Chinese factory workers who pass fourteen plus hours a day manufacturing Mardi Gras beads. The story of a Palestinian family who lose part of their home when Israeli soldiers take it hostage. The story of a United Nations consultant whose legs disintegrated in the wake of a terrorist bombing in Baghdad.

Using the scissors and sledgehammers of story, the Holy Spirit has disassembled my preconceived notions about life countless times, and yet the butt groove in my recliner wears ever thinner.

And finally, the story of ourselves as we wrestle with the paradox of atrocity, strength, and grace in a shrinking world where nothing happens in a vacuum. It is movement that the Forum calls for—not just the speakers and the films, but also the voices of those captured on video, telling us the tale of life's struggle.

Sometimes I wonder if it is only those who have experienced personal tragedy that run around with transformed lives. For those of us who have never worked in a third world factory, or lost a limb from war, or been held hostage—can we not allow ourselves to be impacted by others? Can we not let their experience impact us beyond tears, fear, and astonishment, and into action?

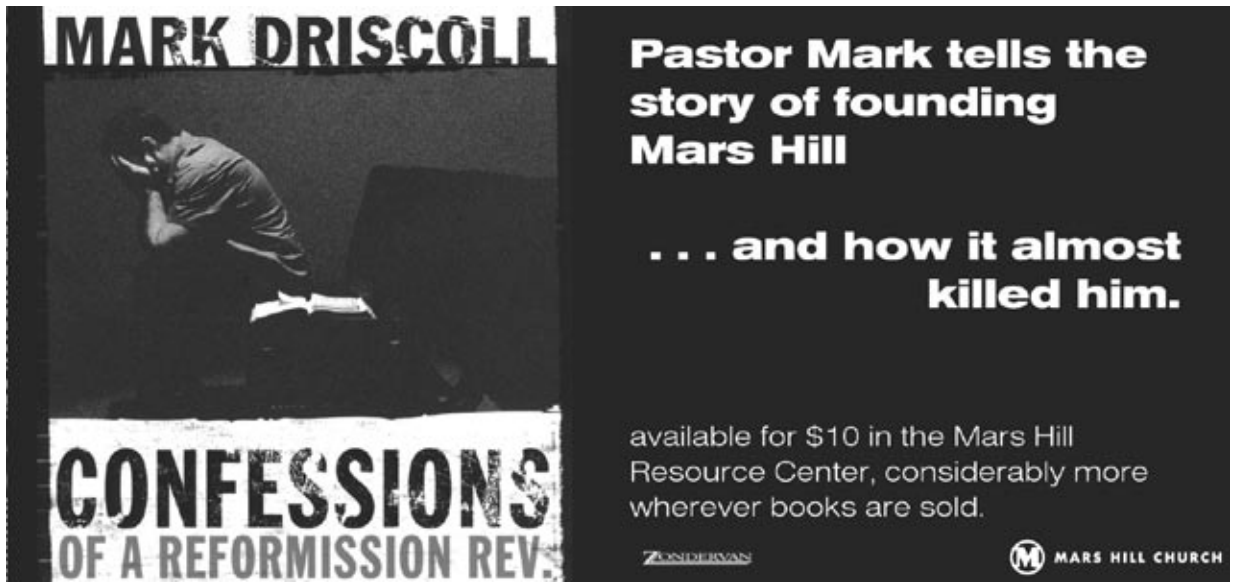
Countless films have aroused in me new perspectives. Using the scissors and sledgehammers of story, the Holy Spirit has disassembled my preconceived notions about life countless times, and yet the butt groove in my recliner wears ever thinner. May the true blinders that splinter my vision only fall away through the disruption of individual atrocity?

I always thought telling other's tragic stories would move me—move us—would give thunder to the voice of the voiceless. But I forget that the purpose is not the catharsis found for the narrator by proclaiming or for the listener by crying. The purpose is change.

God's purpose is always to be changing us, penetrating us, so that tomorrow we will be different than we are today—not only in thought and mind, but also that our whole lives would feel the desperate state of the human condition like grating on raw flesh, so that we desperately crave and intimately understand the soothing balm of the quintessential story: Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

It is a messy world and one cannot accomplish much passing the time with gloves on, trying to stay clean. Get dirty, watch some films, hear some stories, force yourself to be vulnerable, and, like Jesus, share your wounds and with them the name of the ultimate Healer, Judge, Comforter, Mobilizer, and Refuge.

Resources and additional information about the films and organizations mentioned in this article can be found at the following websites: filmfaithandjustice.com; theotherjournal.com; invisiblechildren.com.


MARK DRISCOLL
CONFESSIONS
OF A REFORMISSION REV.
Pastor Mark tells the story of founding Mars Hill
. . . and how it almost killed him.
available for $10 in the Mars Hill Resource Center, considerably more wherever books are sold.
ZONDERVAN
MARS HILL CHURCH

(Part 2)

My first year at Mars Hill

Who are these people and what did I do wrong?

By Nadia

Last month, Nadia wrote about her experience in the Gospel Class. In this month's issue, the adventure continues as we join her on the "final" step to becoming a Mars Hill member: the interview.

"I want to help serve," I told my member-interviewer lady.

"We want you to serve, too," she said.

"I don't know which area really needs me . . ." I trailed off.

"What kinds of things do you have experience in?" she asked.

"Well, the main thing is that I have a heck of a commute and if I can help out from far away, that'd be best."

We brainstormed and came up with some ideas that I could pursue from the comforts of my own home. I couldn't vacuum the church carpets on Saturdays with the Breakfast Club, but I could offer my time doing some paper-based things from home. I'm being specifically vague, in case you hadn't noticed. I wish to protect the innocent, which is everyone in this story except me.

And my name's Nadia. But you knew that. Or did you? If not, hello. Welcome to my Vlog (that sounds like a Norwegian dungeon or something terrible like that, but I mean my "Vox Pop log"). Anyway, in this edition, I'm mumbling about my first attempts to communicate with intelligent life in that galaxy of Mars Hill Staff and Volunteers and Email Addresses. May I continue? Where were we . . .

> I send an email. I get one back directing me to another person. Who directs me to another person. A few emails back and forth and I am told that my help isn't needed at the moment. But then I am contacted from yet another email address...

So, my member-interviewer lady person took down my email and said she'd get me in contact with the appropriate persons for serving. She also said I'd get a member packet in the mail in approximately two weeks.

Let me give you the blow-by-blow, but please hold your judgment for the surprise ending:

I eagerly await my membership packet. It is the late days of summer and warm optimism reigns supreme. While waiting, I get an email from the interviewer lady, connecting me with someone about serving. I send an email. I get one back directing me to another person. Who directs me to another person. A few emails back and forth and I am told that my help isn't needed at the moment. But then I am contacted from yet another email address associated with church. Some confusion ensues about serving projects. More emails. More confusion. Three weeks later, I have some work to do. I complete it, turn it in, and hear nothing back. Nada. Nothing. Zip.

(To be painfully honest, I entertained the wishful thinking that one of the pastors would call back and say, "Nadia! Your work is AMAZING! We've never had someone so professional and so intelligent handling this! I don't know how we even ran a church before this! We are forever indebted to you! Can we make a statue of you to put out with the pyramids in the lobby?" Ok, maybe that wasn't the exact hope, but the real one was every bit as ridiculous and self-centered, I assure you.)

In the absence of such flattery, I return my attention to my membership packet. *Where is it? It's been a month.* I fume. I pout. I mean, how stinkin' hard is it to put a packet in the mail with my name on it? But I've already been emailing and being obnoxious about my serving project, so I decide to let it slide for awhile, before I'm labeled as the whining member. But not because I don't want to whine, I just don't want people to think I whine.

Another month later. I decide to break my silence: I'm planning to move to the Ballard area to be closer to this church, and I don't know what's going on and can't log in to the members' website. Approximately five emails later (three months after my interview), I'm finally granted access to the members' website.

At this point, a major season of self doubt set in. They probably didn't like your work. *They just didn't want to tell you and let you down easy. They don't even know who you are. They don't really want your help. Something's wrong with you. You don't fit.* The pity parties were pretty much my favorite part of this season. But there's only so many pity parties you can attend before the company is just miserable. There may be no party like the "poor me party," but the "poor me party" had to stop.

Humor aside, God was teaching me some humility. Life wasn't all about me. That church wasn't about serving me and patting me on the head. He was teaching me that I needed better motives for serving than to become popular. That I didn't need to take things so personally. That I needed to learn persistence and grace. Basically, I learned that I still have a lot of Christian character development to go through over the next sixty or so years. It's happening now. Slowly, but it's happening.

In January I laid aside my wounded pride and with slightly less self-saturated motives, I started full on attacking the Mars Hill email system and phone lines to get involved. I didn't know anybody, I wasn't involved, I had no community group. But I'd had it with just showing up on Sunday and writing a check.

One Saturday morning I just showed up at the Breakfast Club (I highly recommend it, by the way–great food, low-key, relaxed, and a great way to get chores done and meet people). Now I'm actively involved in volunteering for the church, I have a community group I already feel comfortable in, and I'm making new friends like crazy.

I also just found out today that my original work wasn't despised after all. It just slipped through the cracks. And these people that work and volunteer for MH are working like mad and overwhelmed. I met a whole bunch of them today–I like them. And I'm not a nice person who likes everyone, remember. They do need a lot of help from members to serve on Sundays and throughout the week. If you've tried to get involved and have had similar experiences to mine, please keep trying. If you haven't even tried, please do start getting involved. It may take more than a little persistence, but Mars Hill does need help. It's booming. You've heard Pastor Mark speak about it. Keep trying, and don't take it personally if you're not contacted immediately. Don't waste time like I did.

A week ago at my community group, this girl's dad visited and shared some deep wisdom. He put into words what God's been teaching me the last few months. He said that here in America we are highly individualistic, for better or for worse. With that individualism comes a tendency to be wounded and take things personally. We're big on having and defending our rights. What makes us a good church is not that we don't hurt on another (because we do), but that we forgive and extend grace to one another, choosing to love instead of becoming bitter. The admonition is so simple, but I completely forgot it: "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:32).

> I return my attention to my membership packet. Where is it? It's been a month. I fume. I pout. I mean, how stinkin' hard is it to put a packet in the mail with my name on it?

This obviously isn't the tirade it may have first seemed–against the people who didn't answer my emails. But this also isn't a tirade against those of you who have felt hurt by people in churches–Mars Hill or another. It's an invitation to extend forgiveness and grace with a tender heart, like Jesus does to us every day. Beginning to live this way, by choice, has freed me up to do what I wanted to do in the first place: to serve and become part of my church for real.

I'm so thankful the girl's dad shared his sage advice with us that evening–it struck me to the heart. It's wonderful being in a Community Group where live discussions like that one can happen. Did I mention I love my new Community Group already? I haven't been there long, but it's great. And *that*, my friends, is for next time. Peace out!

pastor

mike wilkerson

The grunge thing that happened in the early nineties is probably what first put Seattle on the map for me. Though I must admit, I was more fascinated with Weird Al's parody of Nirvana than the grunge gods themselves. I was a teenager living in a rural Kansas town at the time, trying to be a skater. It's no easy task for a church kid in a dusty farm town with one stop light to develop a good sense of culture.

I grew up a PK (Preacher's Kid for the rest of you) thinking that I'd follow in my father's footsteps. Until one day at the age of eight when I distinctly remember hearing God tell me not to pursue that as a vocation. It was equally clear to me that God did intend to use me somehow in the church, just not in the way I'd been assuming.

So I devoted myself to the study of mathematics and computer science with thoughts of some sort of technical career—except for a brief period of flirting with the idea of living life in search of rock stardom (doomed to be a little more like Spinal Tap than Nirvana, I'm sure).

Looking back, it seems that when God did finally draw me to Seattle, it wasn't for the career in technology that I had supposed, but to change my values and fit my family into His plan for Mars Hill.

I can remember quite clearly coming home from a Mars Hill men's meeting in February 2001 and telling Trisha that I felt God was leading us to plant our flag in Seattle. That was the moment when our tightly woven five-year plan to move back to the Midwest and start our family began to unravel. We came here thinking the idea of Seattle was temporary. But God wanted us to set down roots, raising our children thousands of miles away from the loving family we'd left behind in Missouri.

He also wanted to change my vision of the future from a life dominated by scholarship and technical achievement to one devoted to raising a missional family in a biblical community committed to impacting the culture around us.

So I plugged away in my software engineering career, and we plugged into Mars Hill. By day, I worked first at a declining dot com, and later at Microsoft. Nights and weekends were spent playing drums for a few years in The Parsons and leading a couple of Community Groups, while Trisha ran the Children's Ministry for a season just prior to the birth of our firstborn, Henry. Martin and Abigail were to follow about two years apart.

Somewhere along the way, God began provoking me with the thought of eldership and an image of a Mars Hill future generations from now, still going strong, sustained by hundreds or thousands of healthy households. In the image, they appeared as pillars. Looking back, they now strike me as representing the architecture of Mars Hill, built upon the Cornerstone who is Jesus. It was that image that God used to call me to eldership and the task of developing our Community Groups, which would become the pillars in my vision.

After a season of both working full time at Microsoft and building Community Groups, it became clear that I'd landed in the middle of a full time occupation. I was both delighted and surprised when I left software, which I enjoyed very much, to join the Mars Hill staff full time as a Community Groups Pastor, which has proven to be an even greater joy.

Pastor Mike's Stats

Born: **October 14, 1977 in Joplin, Missouri**
Married: **June 12, 1999 to Trisha**
Children: **Henry (4), Martin (2), Abigail (1)**
First set foot in Mars Hill: **2000**
Became an elder: **March 2004**

Backyard Bible Club

(continued from page 6)

is expected. The errand-running ends there, as every needed item, from ice cream to tooth picks to a treasure cove DVD, is included in a boxed set of materials.

The number of required volunteers at each host's home ranges from five to ten, depending on the number of kids—though larger community groups are welcome to exceed that number. Tami hopes to invade Proxy to recruit high school age reinforcements. "The younger kids look up to them," she explained. "It makes it more cool."

Older neighborhood kids might well want to help as well—or at least pretend as much for a chance to participate in all the fun. "There's nothing cooler than a five-year-old being helped by the coolest ten-year-old they know," Joan said. "That's almost better than an adult. So there's a place for everybody."

Tami warns that "just because everything's provided doesn't mean that there's not some extra work that goes into it." But in the end, the goal is the Gospel. And for many local moms, finding their kids a safe summer day diversion is most definitely good news.

Baptism

(continued from page 3)

didn't understand how hard my life was.

On New Year's Day last year, I begrudgingly took my older daughter, Maya, out shopping to spend some of the gift certificates she'd gotten for Christmas. After a few stops, we ended up at a Barnes and Noble store, seeking a book recommended by a friend that would offer some type of guidance about what to do with problems in my marriage. This same wonderful friend had talked me into coming to Mars Hill just before Thanksgiving. I didn't find the book I was looking for, but I did discover a bewildering assortment of other topics, authors, opinions, and even versions of the Bible for sale. I was rescued from my anxieties when a happy Maya showed up with her selections and I fled the store empty-handed.

We hopped in the car for a rushed drive home—we were due at a friend's house for a party that afternoon. Unfortunately, when I tried to start the car it was totally dead—no starter, no lights, no nothing. I was livid. I pounded the steering wheel with my fist and yelled. My blood was boiling, my back was tensing up. It was that moment that God chose to speak to me, saying, "Why won't you let Jesus Christ into your heart?"

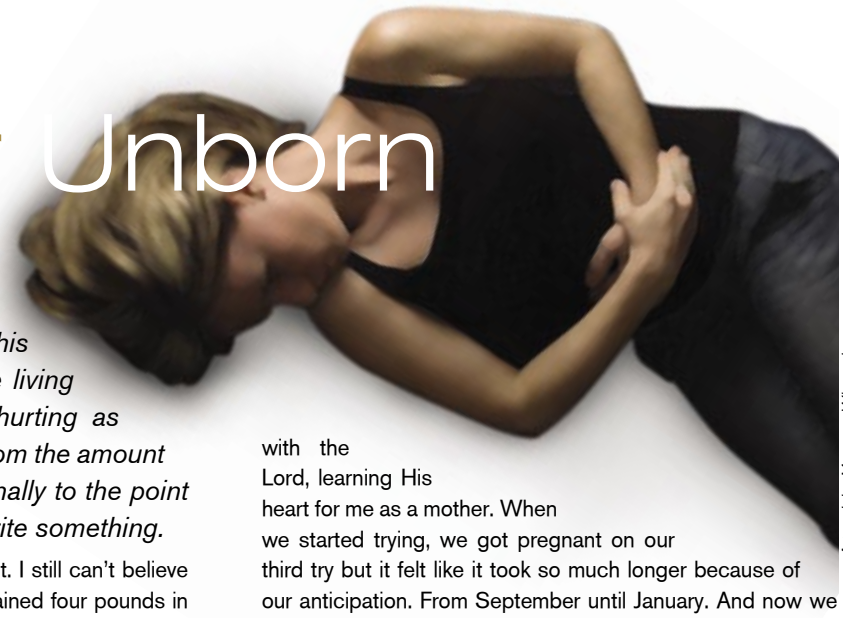
I was so stunned that I sat there for about a minute, a calm coming over me. From that point on, it seemed as though a thick drape that had been laid over my life was being lifted. I could look back through my past and see that my success in life was not actually due to luck or skill. I could look ahead and see that my years to come would be filled with more of the same anger, fear, and doubt that were far too familiar to me. I could look around each day and see that I wasn't treating those in my life with all of the respect, dignity, and care that I could muster. I attended Mars Hill regularly for about three months, letting God's words work on my heart. On Easter Sunday last year, I came forward, took communion, and accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior—finally becoming a Christian.

Those who've known me for a long time say that there is something different about me. One of my co-workers said I am more serious and, yet, more relaxed. A very good friend said that I am more optimistic and energetic. My wife said I am more loving and understanding with our daughters. My brother said that he can see me acting with a new kind of purpose and direction. I have been transformed.

And why wouldn't I be? My soul is safe and I praise Jesus. His suffering and sacrifice compel me not to glorify myself, but submit to a life of service. My mission is to love and nurture everyone that God puts into my life, even when it is difficult or painful. When I accept that everything that I have and can do is a gift from God, I have a sense of urgency about sharing with others and I will never be alone again when Jesus is with me.

Note: If you have questions about baptism, pick up a free copy of "Baptism: An Explanation of Believer Baptism and Refutation of Contrary Beliefs," available at the resource desk.

Mother Unborn



Artwork by Morgana Wingard

By Kelly Cowan

January 24, 2006. I have some bad news. As I write this news down I glance across the living room at my husband who is hurting as much as me. We're exhausted from the amount of shed tears but I think we're finally to the point of being able to sit down and write something.

Yet I don't want to write it down yet. I still can't believe it, honestly. I still feel pregnant. I have gained four pounds in ten weeks. I eat as much as ever. My body has that filling out feeling.

But then came a new symptom. The blood truly did surprise me today. The girl I glanced at in the mirror walking into the bathroom looked very different from the girl who walked out minutes later. I burst into tears instantly. I wanted it to stop but I also knew it was over.

I hurried back to my desk and called Jason in tears. As he urged me to call the doctor, he was on his way to be with me before I could make up my mind if that was necessary. I slipped out of the office unseen. I couldn't have been more disheveled. In my silent car I managed to call the doctor and the blonde nurse with bright blue contacts was the one who answered the phone.

I was okay as I told her my symptoms. I probably sounded so okay that it didn't occur to her to remember her bedside manner. She said it so matter of fact that it stunned me–even though I could have given myself the same diagnosis. I think it surprised her that I was so upset. She asked if I was still there and when I said, "I'm here", muffled through tears, then she realized. "Oh honey...why don't you come in..."

As the call ended, I looked in my rearview to see Jason had just pulled up. I could barely look at his face as I got out of the car. Seeing the father of my baby, I lost it. He was being strong for me.

What could we talk about on the way? We were holding our breath. Maybe I hadn't bled that much. Maybe it was normal. When the doctor walked in and asked what happened I just looked at her with glossy eyes and finally turned to Jason to speak for me.

I didn't want to show her the incriminating evidence. Just three weeks earlier we had met this doctor and she had congratulated us on our first. I did the urine test, answered her questions, proudly showed her our fertility charts. We walked out of that office practically skipping. We were "officially" pregnant! It was as if I had walked out of that office with a certificate ordaining me a Mother.

Now that same doctor would officially declare me not pregnant, not to have a child, and not to be a mom. It's such an unnatural feeling to have that taken away. I had been journaling for almost a year in a "mom journal," going through a process with the Lord, learning His heart for me as a mother. When we started trying, we got pregnant on our third try but it felt like it took so much longer because of our anticipation. From September until January. And now we must begin again. How strange to not get to complete what was begun in me.

The hospital experience confirmed everything for us. What is your name? Social Security? Policy Number? If it hadn't been for the fish tank in the office, I would have asked to lie down on the floor during my interrogation. I just wanted to get my ultrasound.

The front desk lady had me drink water until my bladder was full for my ultrasound. The nurse was our final messenger. I appreciated her honesty as she walked us through the procedure. With the room dark, all eyes were fixed on the screen. She was very kind and answered all of our questions about what we were looking at. She pointed out the amniotic sac and my ovaries and uterus. Then we got a closer look and finally, before she told us, we recognized a tiny little baby–our baby!–came into view.

I saw you, baby! I saw you! You were too small, she said, and your yolk sac was much too large for this stage. And she didn't see your heart beating. But yet there you were. I saw you. You should be about nine weeks old but you appeared to be about six as she was measuring you and the sac. Jason asked the question I dared not: *did that mean the baby had been dead for three weeks?* Probably, she said gently.

I cried watching you on that screen. When the nurse left, your daddy started crying too. I looked over at him from the bed and he was staring at me with his eyes full of tears. He tried to be very strong, but he welled up like I knew he would. Finally, later in the evening, he was really able to break wide open and let it all spill out.

He said he wanted you to be okay. He didn't want to start all over. He wanted to get to be a dad. I told him he already was a dad. We're already parents, for you. In fact, you're still inside of me. Apparently your lifeless young body is cozy in there and my body doesn't want to give you up. But, my child, let's not be afraid to let go. I think I will see you again.

Lord, thank You for this chance to be a mom to our first child. I couldn't have been more alive. I wouldn't have seen a whole new side of Jason. I wouldn't have learned a whole new side of me. I wouldn't have known how much I wanted this until I had it. Even in our sadness we want to trust You. Thank You for this blessing that has changed us.

05.06 **Index Rock Climbing –** Intermediate to Advanced Climbing. The clmb will involve multipitch rock-climbing and working on crack-climbing technique.
David Skavdahl at ristreto@spu.edu

05.06 **Tour de Snoqualmie Valley –** An MTB Tour of the Lower Snoqualmie Valley. The trail boasts views of Tolt River, Snoqualmie River, farmlands.
Justin Auld at j1auld@yahoo.com

05.13 **Tolt-McDonald Mountain Biking** – Mountain Biking in the Scenic Snoqualmie Valley.
Brandon Talley at btalley@spu.edu

05.13 **SCUBA at Three Tree Point –** A great dive near Burien. This dive will explore sunken cars, abundance of Puget Sound sea life.
Janelle Baarspul at jabaarspul@yahoo.com

05.13 **Tiger Mountain Family Hike –** A great day hike only ½ hour from the city. Family fun.
Nancyjean Tripp at jersey_climbgirl@yahoo.com

05.20 **Tour de West Seattle** – Explore the shorelines and parks of West Seattle on bicycles. 20 miles ending with a downhill ride back to Alki.
Ali Wick at awick@anchorenv.com

05.20 **Mount Si Hike –** A great adrenalin booster near the city. Seattle and the Olympics views reward the persevering hiker.
Lisa Dale at lisamdale@hotmail.com

05.27-29 **Backpacking at Alpine Lakes Wilderness –** The Alpine Lakes Wilderness area is the great treasure in our backyard. Total distance: about 25 miles.
Dan Harder at dan_harder@hotmail.com

05.27-29 **Backpacking at Olympic National Park –** Views of Mt. Olympus, old growth forest, alpine meadows and lakes. About 18 miles.
Lisa Dale at lisamdale@hotmail.com

MH ART presents:

Scott J. Morgan
Lucas Vidana & Mike Gallegos

www.scottjmorganart.com
www.vidanapopart.com
www.myspace.com/mikegallegos

Art Opening:
Saturday April 8th

Artist Reception:
Saturday May 13th

Work on display:
April 8th - June 7th

Location:
Mars Hill Church
1401 NW Leary Way
Seattle, Wa. 98107

A Mom to Mars Hill

The story of Joanne Meyer

By Amity Egge

Growing up, Joanne Meyer longed for her mother to tuck her into bed at night. Although Joanne loved and admired her mother very much, she lacked the nurturing touch that Joanne needed.

"I think that a lot of it had to do with her culture," Joanne said of her Filipino mother. "She equated being a mom with feeding and clothing us, taking by providing for our physical needs. But she did not look at herself as a nurturer–comforting, affirming and soothing."

As a young girl, Joanne wanted her mother to enter into her hurt when she cried. This unsatisfied adolescent desire for Joanne to receive nurturing has become a lifelong commitment to nurture other women through discipleship.

At Mars Hill Joanne is a mother to many younger women who seek relationship, understanding, guidance, and counseling.

"Sometimes words are not what people need. They just need to know that they are being heard," Joanne said.

Joanne views discipleship as a scriptural form of building up other women in growing and maturing relationships with Christ.

"In discipleship if you are not growing yourself, you can only take them as far as you are," she said. "When I see [these women] growing spiritually and I see a change in their relationships with other people in their life, I end up glorifying God. And I am amazed at what I hear and see."

Joanne spends time listening to the younger women at Mars Hill sharing their experiences of heartache and pain, and often times these experiences relate back to their parents. Joanne is always careful not to make excuses for their parents, but tries to give them a perspective of why their parents may have raised them that way.

Joanne also tries to lead these women to embrace Jesus as their foundation.

"Whether we are single or married, with kids or widowed, Jesus is really all that we have. It's the foundation on which we stand. There will be hurt and it will be difficult," Joanne said. "I bring to them what is the truth and what Jesus has taught me through Scripture."

Joanne is also careful not to use Bible verses as a superficial band-aid to cover up every problem. She tries to teach other women how she has worked Scripture through her own heart.

Joanne does not rely on accountability to help other women grow in Christ. She prefers to listen, to guide, and to encourage. "I have done accountability all my life and in a way I just felt more guilty," Joanne said.

When women are struggling with a particular sin she tries to get to the root of the problem rather than trying to be their accountability partner. She asks them questions like, "why has marriage/children/appearance/whatever become an idol to you?"

Photo by Rick James

"Whether we are single or married, with kids or widowed, Jesus is really all that we have. It's the foundation on which we stand. There will be hurt and it will be difficult." –Joanne Meyer

Joanne learned how to disciple women through her own life experiences and involvement with the Navigators, an international Christian outreach ministry.

Joanne became a Christian during her teen years while attending a local evangelical church. When Joanne entered her twenties she found herself desiring a deeper relationship with Christ and sought guidance from the elders at her church. However, her elders were unable to give her the answers that she needed. Instead they would quote Bible verses and scoot her out the door.

Joanne eventually found the answers to her seeking heart when some single women who were ten years older than her began building relationships with her.

According to Joanne, these single working women from the Navigators, were not looking for someone to marry. They desired to get married, but chose to serve God and lead full Christian lives in the meantime.

These women invited Joanne to Bible studies, prayed for her, and took her out.

"They wanted to know about me. They wanted to know my face," Joanne said.

Joanne joined the Navigators and began to disciple other women by leading Bible studies and building relationships with them. Joanne also met her husband, Mars Hill Pastor Bent Meyer, through working with the Navigators.

"Once a person becomes a Christian, the rest is follow-up," Joanne said. "You don't leave them on their own. You teach them and give them what they need."

For many grateful Mars Hill individuals, Joanne–by pointing to Jesus–has done exactly that.

PLACE OF THE MONTH

Ballard Farmers' Market

By Holly Thompson

May is a great month to stroll amongst the fresh flowers and homemade-everything at the Ballard Farmers' Market (Sundays from 10 to 4 on Ballard Avenue).

This quaint weekly tradition boasts the many things you'd find in a larger street market condensed in one non-exhausting trip up and down an adorable historic block in old Ballard. Fifteen minutes on foot will get you there from Mars Hill: Ballard, making this a perfect post-service destination. If you choose to hunt for parking, the limited street parking will fill up quick when the summery days beckon larger crowds.

My husband willingly joined me for the short trek a few Sundays ago to check out the Farmers' Market. If you decide to wander over, be on the lookout for these four highlights of the journey:

Funky Stones

The market jewelry is gorgeous and definitely worth a look. It reminded me of Pastor Mark's Revelation sermons about God decorating heaven with precious stones (Rev. 21:11, 18–21). Consider the Market wares memento from the Homeland.

The Cidermaster

Wade "Cidermaster" Bennett owns a farm in Enumclaw where he grows his own apples and raspberries for his cider. Though he sells all-ages apple and raspberry ciders, the real treat is his wide variety of hard ciders–he offers samples of whatever you want to try. The Cidermaster is very knowledgeable. Ask him for recommendations depending on how you want to serve the cider.

Colorful Flora

Tulips in bright colors are everywhere! If you are going to spend just a few bucks at the market, tulips are the way to go. If you're not a flower person, the Market flowers make a great gift.

Sunday Snackage

Homemade bruschetta, organic fruit and veggies, salmon, shellfish, gourmet bakery treats, chocolate, and nuts make the Ballard Farmers' Market an excellent place to graze. There are a few lunch items available, but if you don't want to eat hotdogs, you may want to eat lunch before you arrive. There is even a vegetarian grill near the weenie wagon but they didn't seem to have any protein items like tofu.

Photo by Erin Silva

Some last things of note: you can bring Fido if you keep him on a leash. The market is open rain or shine, all year long. Every vendor seems to take cash or check; a few take Visa.

To walk there from church (half a mile): Go west on Leary. After Leary curves, take a left on Vernon. Go one block to Ballard Avenue and the market is on your left.

Photo by Rick James

PLAY SOFTBALL!
3rd Annual FARM LEAGUE
TOURNAMENT
& BBQ
* Benefit fundraiser for the Mars Hill Agathos Farm
Saturday, June 24, 8 - 5 PM
Marymoor Park in Redmond
$15 per player (includes BBQ)
For more info., EMAIL mhsoftball@gmail.com.
MARS HILL CHURCH

NIGHT ON THE TOWN

Girls' Night Out at the Q Café

By Amity Egge

I know that all you men are curious about what women talk about when they have a "girls' night." Well, I am sorry to dispel the mystery, but our extended discussions about the various lip gloss selections at Bath & Bodyworks probably won't interest you–unless maybe you enjoy listening to folksy singer-songwriters in one of Seattle's best (only?) Christian coffeehouses.

Our night began at the Q Café, a music venue and coffeehouse operated out of Quest Church (3223 15th Ave W, across the bridge from Mars Hill: Ballard). The Q Café is kind of like the Paradox, only there is more color on the walls and the food and coffee is in the same room as the stage.

We were at the Q Café to see folk singer Tyrone Wells, a touring musician from Southern California. We showed up early in fear that the venue would sell out and it did while Jakob van Auken (another California singer-songwriter) was halfway his set.

The show's lineup began with Seattle Pacific University's Danielle Henry. Danielle played some honest and endearing songs accompanied by her acoustic guitar. Her voice was powerful and she played the guitar with a humble sort of passion. Danielle will be releasing a CD in May and I definitely plan on buying one. You can check out her music on Myspace.

Jakob was up second, and played his guitar and harmonica with soul and grace. Some of his songs had a rough blues feel, while other songs were soft and sweet. His music is online also, at jvarock.com.

Finally, Tyrone Wells made it to the stage. Tall and personable, Tyrone's music contains shades of Jack Johnson or Ben Harper. His songs were full of wit and humor–which sets him apart–but he's not above a good old-fashioned love song.

In between each song, Tyrone told funny stories. Very entertaining. When he played "Sea Breeze," a song most loved by all the girls in the room, he invited us all to sing along. Apparently, Tyrone has played "Sea Breeze" at many a wedding.

This spring will see the release of his new CD, which is available for purchase (along with his three previous albums) at tyronewells.com.

More about the Q Café and Community Center

The Q Café has embraced "Cafe, Community and Culture" since its grand opening in November 2002. This non-profit café has integrated its goals, visions and mission through the following:

1. Supporting artists and musicians by displaying local artists' work in the cafe and by operating as a music venue to showcase musicians' talents
2. Adopting local families by responding to their physical and emotional needs
3. Providing a resource center for the displaced and marginalized in our community
4. Implementing activities to help build "community" amongst neighbors
5. Helping raise funds for other non-profit organizations
6. Creating a space welcoming of families, with a special corner and playroom just for children, and finally,
7. Serving the best coffee in Seattle.

For more information, go to www.qcafe.org

Action

UDYC *(University District Youth Center)*

What do debating politics, learning a new card game, and making smoothies all have in common? At UDYC they are all great ways for volunteers to build relationships with the many homeless youth that hang out on the Ave.

UDYC was established to provide a variety of services that assist homeless youth. The organization exists to create a safe environment for youth, provide basic services (showers, food and clothing), and offer shelter referral, educational services, alcohol and drug counseling, mental health services and case management.

Like many service providers in Seattle, UDYC is dependent on community members stepping up to volunteer their time and skills. Philippians 2 charges us to look into the interests of others and serve them humbly. Volunteering at UDYC is a practical way to put this verse into action.

How to serve at *UDYC*

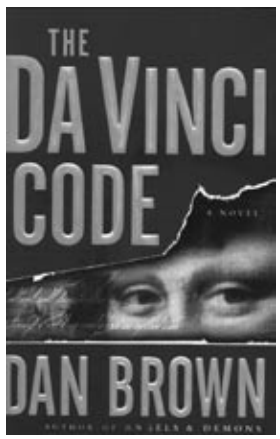
Mars Hill member Julia Stewart is on staff at UDYC. If you're interested in serving with this organization, email her at julias@ccsww.org

SUNDAY
CHILDREN'S MINISTRY
Volunteers are needed to serve the church by loving kids.
Email kids@marshillchurch.org to sign up for the next volunteer training session, 12:30 5/21 @ MH Ballard

Mediocre Mendacities

Book Review

By Matthew S. Winslow



Writing a review of *The Da Vinci Code* is like telling you that professional wrestling is a bunch of men who like to roll around with each other: I wouldn't be adding much new to the conversation. But with the movie adaptation due out on the 19th of this month, and with the "Gospel of Judas" having been released last month, there's bound to be plenty of buzz about this book/movie/marketing campaign by Dan Brown.

For the few of you who haven't read the book or know anything about it, *The Da Vinci Code* is a novel by Dan Brown about an American symbologist and a French cryptologist who are chased by the French police while trying to unravel a Gnostic mystery that the Catholic Church has purportedly been keeping hidden for two thousand years. (There's the first hint that something about this novel might not be quite right: we are supposed to believe that the church–the Catholic Church, no less–is organized: talk about suspension of disbelief.)

The novel opens with the death of the curator of the Louvre at the hands of a homicidal albino monk (no, really, I'm not making this up). The curator is supposedly the last person alive to know a great secret that can rock the very foundations of orthodox Christian belief. With his death, the secret dies.

The monk, however, doesn't finish his work, allowing the curator in his dying moments to leave a message to the one person he hopes will be able to interpret the clues and discover the secret, American symbologist Robert Langdon. What's a *symbologist*? you ask? It's someone whose career is interpreting symbols, sort of like an academic tarot card reader. Don't go looking for a school that offers this degree: Dan Brown made it up for the book.

Langdon ends up being called to the crime scene and is soon marked as the prime suspect. Also on hand is French police cryptologist Sophie Neveu, who just happens to be the curator's granddaughter (I guess the French police who called her to help decipher the clues weren't able to read her file and discover she might have a conflicted interest in the case).

Sophie and Langdon soon realize they need to escape the Louvre. They do so and proceed to run around France and England as they discover the great secret of the ages: the modern, twenty-first century New Age version of feminist religion was so cool that Jesus, two thousand years ago, decided to be a feminist and married Mary Magdalene. Mary fled to France upon Jesus' death where she gave birth to their love child who turned out to be the primogeniture of the Merovingian kings.

Meanwhile, back in Jerusalem, Peter, Paul, and the other disciples and apostles were changing Jesus' teachings to allow them to take power. Of course, they were so inept that they said silly things like we should rejoice in our sufferings, and proceeded to live that out. See how silly these patriarchal chauvinists are?

They did such a good job (except for the part where all of them but one died painful deaths) that for the next three hundred years no one knew exactly what to believe until the Emperor Constantine convened the Council of Nicea and declared for the first time that Jesus was the son of God. And the church has been trying to hide this whole conspiracy ever since.

I'm not making this up: that's what the book claims and that's what Dan Brown believes.

> Jesus is bigger than Dan Brown. His words have sold many more copies than all of Brown's books put together.

Anyone who has even casually studied the early history of the church will immediately notice some glaring errors in Brown's revisionist version. Even the dimmest of bulbs can google "Da Vinci Code errors" and find that there's hardly a single "fact" in *The Da Vinci Code* that is not easily refuted. Brown even has the characters fleeing across Paris in what would be the Seattle equivalent of going from Fremont to Northgate via Federal Way.

So why the worry? What's the big deal?

In a sense, there is no worry. Jesus is bigger than Dan Brown. His words have sold many more copies than all of Brown's books put together. He spoke the world into existence; Dan Brown doesn't even know that British police don't carry guns.

Jesus tells us He is the truth (John 14:6) and He also tells us to know the truth and the truth will set us free (John 8:32). Christianity is founded on the historical facts about the son of God who came down and walked among men and died a real death upon a real cross. No number of revisionist neo-Gnostics can change that. Grace comes from God and is a gift from Him that we cannot lose, so we need not fear revisionist history.

Nonetheless, this book is talking smack about Jesus, changing the gospel and making claims that are contrary to the truth that He came and died for. As Christians, as the called who love Christ, we should be concerned about someone saying false things and making false accusations about our Lord, but we needn't think that poor Jesus is going to be misunderstood if we don't boycott/picket the film. Jesus' truth is bigger than Brown's falsehoods.

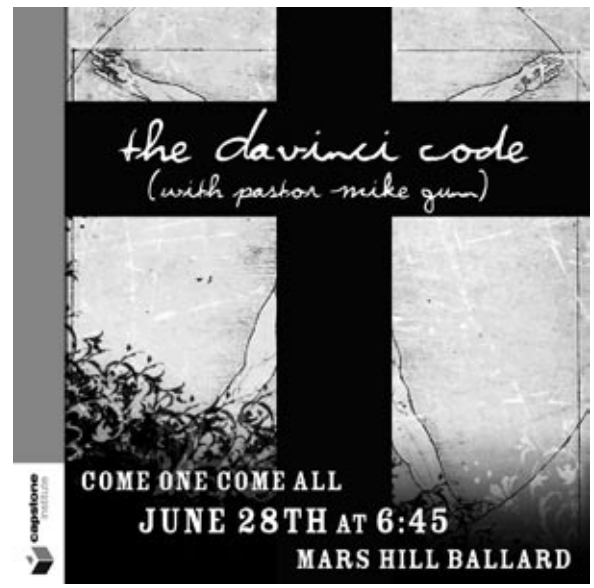
We should, though, see an opportunity and equip ourselves to discuss the book/movie as friends and co-workers talk about it. As with all things, whether it is "American Idol" or *The Da Vinci Code* we should be ready to talk about it in relation to Christ, should Jesus give us the opportunity.

At the simplest level, if you're not someone who reads tons of books and is a history wonk, a simple response would be the experiential approach: the Jesus of the novel/movie is neither the Jesus of history nor the Jesus that died on the cross to save me. And then turn the conversation to the love that took Him to the cross.

Or you can take the apologetic approach and be prepared to discuss the historical inaccuracies and fallacies. There are a number of books available that discuss these problems, and they're all pretty equal. My personal favorite is Ben Witherington's *The Gospel Code*. You don't even have to purchase a book to learn what's wrong with *The Da Vinci Code*. A number of online apologetic resources exist. One of these is James White's Alpha and Omega Ministries at www.aomin.org/tdvc.html.

Regardless of which approach you take, as with all culture our response should be to pray for those who need Jesus and then use the opportunities we have to engage the culture, not hide from it. *The Da Vinci Code* is but one instance of the many opportunities we have every day to glorify God, not by ignoring that culture, but by engaging it with the truth.

Note: June's Capstone lecture series includes a class about the Da Vinci Code (June 28, 6:45pm at Mars Hill: Ballard)



SCENE& SCREEN

The Da Vinci Code Challenge

Picket? Protest? How about go watch it.

By Pastor Mike Gunn

Editor's note: On June 28 at Mars Hill Ballard, Pastor Mike Gunn of Harrambee Church will be giving a lecture on The Da Vinci Code *as a part of the Capstone Institute's June lecture series.*

This month ushers in the summer blockbuster season with *The Da Vinci Code*, starring Tom Hanks and directed by Ron Howard. The movie, according to Howard, will stay faithful to author Dan Brown's "fictional" story.

This fictional perspective, however, clearly repudiates an historical event: the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Or does it really? If you asked Dan Brown two years ago whether or not he thought it was true, as Elizabeth Vargas did in an ABC special, he might have responded that he does indeed consider his work to be based on fact.
In a Da Vinci Code blog by Julie Cragg, Brown is quoted with a slightly more nuanced perspective:

"There is simply too much contradictory documentation in existence... much of which seems to spring from reputable sources. At the same time, it's interesting to note that since the beginning of recorded time, history has been written by the 'winners' (those societies and belief systems that conquered and survived). Despite an obvious bias in this accounting method, we still measure the 'historical accuracy' of a given concept by examining how well it concurs with our existing historical record. Many historians now believe (as do I) that in gauging the historical accuracy of a given concept, we should first ask ourselves a far deeper question: How historically accurate is history itself?"

This seems to be an accurate summary of Brown's position. He's not so much questioning the veracity of Christian doctrine as much as he is questioning the idea of veracity itself. He's a revisionist, interpreting history the way he wants to see history. He's more interested in interpreting truth than finding it.

Meanwhile, the Christian community continues to react the same way they did when Martin Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ* came out: paranoid. There has been like 20 books written to refute *The Da Vinci Code* (oh yeah–I have one coming out in May), which ironically fuels the Dan Brown marketing machine. Many of these books insist on debating theology with Dan Brown, and take great pains to ensure that every one of his "facts" are proven false.

Personally I don't think Dan Brown, or those who have enjoyed this book really care. I believe that we Christians are answering the wrong questions and therefore failing to adequately engage the book and those reading it.

And people are reading it everywhere. I was on a train in India and an Indian reading *The Da Vinci Code* asked me what I thought of it. Why are people asking me what I think about a piece of "fiction"? I believe that we need to step back and begin to think about some of the following questions:

Why was such a mediocre book so popular?

Why do people want to know what Christians think? Is anyone asking about John Grisham's *Runaway Jury*?

Why do 67% Canadians polled believe the story is true? (okay, they're Canadians)

There is no way that a traditional apologetic stance is going to persuade millions of Canadians–or Americans, for that matter–that *The Da Vinci Code* is unfounded. We continue to fight cultural battles with antiquated weaponry. Back in the 19th century, the argument was against Darwinism and rationalists. The church adopted a rational apologetic to fight fire with fire and unwittingly set the foundation for the mitigation of biblical authority, hand-cuffing the gospel to a modernist platform.

This culture has bought into a poorly written book because Dan Brown has fed a ripe crowd with Gnostic pabulum. His prosaic book is nonetheless exciting because it challenges the status quo that the western church represents. The time is ripe for such a book because the "rational" gospel of the 20th century has tilled the soil. We live in a postmodern world that questions authority and truth, yet the church continues to see themselves as the bastion of truth, in spite of their shallow gospel; we have failed to call people to repentance and challenge them to live out the gospel.

So what? First we need to be informed. What is this book about? (check out this month's Vox Pop book review for a *Da Vinci Code* plot summary) Many people bought and burned *The Last Temptation* without knowing what the movie was about.

Then we need to do is acknowledge where the book makes accurate critique of the church–seeking power rather than living and proclaiming the gospel of grace–and then begin to use what I call the "Socratic" method of evangelism. Ask questions, because it quickly becomes apparent that none of Dan Brown's ideas have any real substance.

Conspiracy theorists like Brown want us to believe that the story of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection is a poor rip-off of the Egyptian (Osiris and Isis), Greek (Dionysius) and Roman (Mithras) mystery religions that predate the gospel by hundreds of years. The fact is all of those mystery religions died out for a reason: they weren't connected to reality. Their gods were mythological, and their stories lacked any real connection with humanity. Much of the evidence that "proves" the mystery religions' similarities with the Christian story comes from scant third- and forth-century sources–years after the Christian story was promulgated.

At the heart of the Christian story is the cross, without which there is no real story. In contrast, in *The Da Vinci Code* and in the mystery religions, the cross and the resurrection are peripheral to a very secretive society that doesn't even believe that the sacred and the secular have anything in common.

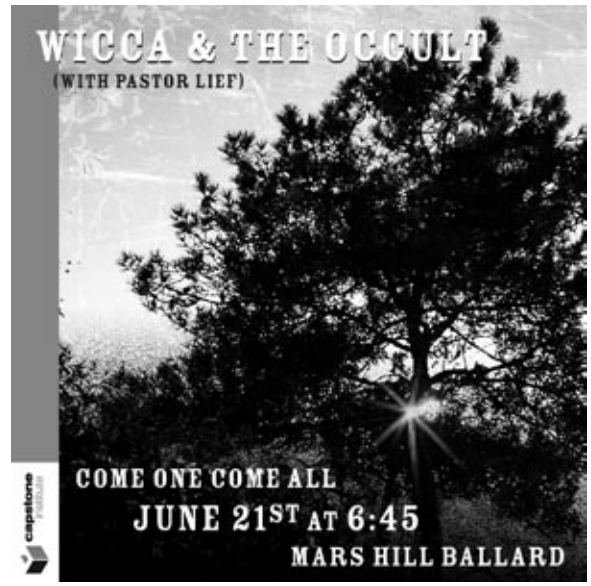
Cultural challenges have been part of the Christian reality for two thousand years. In the second century AD, there is some graffiti etched into stone in a room on Palatine Hill near Circus Maximus in Rome that depicts a man with the head of an ass hanging on a cross over the words, "Elexa Manos worships his god." In AD 152 the first apologist, Justin Martyr, wrote, "They proclaim our madness to consist in this: that we give to a crucified man a place to the unchangeable eternal God."

This is not new! 1 Corinthians 1 reminds us that our preaching of the cross is "foolishness to the Greeks, and a stumbling block to the Jews." The church has been built around Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, and our message still consists of this truth. It continues to be "foolishness (*moria* in the Greek, which is where we get our word *moron*) and a "stumbling block" (*scandalos* in the Greek, which is obviously where we get our word *scandalous*).

The cross and the story of Jesus have survived while the mystery religions are long gone not because the church defeated them but because they were irrelevant under the glory and the veracity of the Christian story. The story of the cross is still moronic and scandalous to those that don't want to believe. The best we can do is love God, love people, and live the reality of the Truth to those who are skeptical of our faith. Then we can begin to recover the dignity so many of us desire.

So my suggestion is go out, spend the nine bucks, sit back, watch an exciting drama, and then let the questions begin and our Lord be glorified.

*http://www.danbrown.com/novels/davinci_code/pub_weekly.html



SCENE& SCREEN

Getting Into Heaven

What do you say?

By Mike O'Dea

My name is Mike and I am one of the Community Group leaders that sits down and talks with people becoming members of Mars Hill. One of the most important issues to discuss before approving someone for membership is whether they are indeed a Christian.

A revealing way to determine the answer is to ask the applicant the following: If you were to pass away in your sleep tonight and the next thing you knew you found yourself at the gate of heaven and God Himself was standing there and He says to you, "Fred, why should I let you into my heaven?" Tell me Fred, how would you respond?

Recently, I interviewed a man by the name of Jeff. When I asked him the above question and how he would reply to God, Jeff said, "I would say to God, 'I have my attorney with me, and His name is Jesus Christ. He told me to keep my mouth shut and let Him do the talking.'"

Over the years I have heard hundreds of replies to that qualifying question but Jeff's answer was indeed the most interesting. It is also very biblical (see Rom. 8:34; Eph. 2:18; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1).

It turns out that Jeff is a defense attorney here in Ballard. No doubt he will indeed be an asset to God's family at Mars Hill Church. It is wise to keep our mouth shut and let Jesus do the talking.

WHAT THE OLOGY?

Are Bible Code formulas and predictions legit?

Q: Forget *The Da Vinci Code,* what about all those theories about cryptic messages hidden within the original Hebrew text of the Bible? I've read some books that say this code predicts that a meteor will hit the earth this year—should I start building a bomb shelter and saving Clif bars that can possibly be used for bartering in the bleak apocalyptic future that awaits us?

A: Although we believe that Clif bars taste a lot better than they look, we also generally believe that the Bible's inspiration is manifest most clearly in what it says on the surface (2 Tim. 3:16) and not in what can be found through supercomputers and mathematical functions. Despite the claims of many that the Bible codes have proven to foretell the future, the reality is quite different.

First of all, those who attempt to discover Bible codes will be the first to tell you that they cannot use them to foretell the future. This is because one must begin by taking a known historical connection such as "Hitler-Holocaust" and conducting a search via supercomputer in the Hebrew Old Testament (or just the Torah, the first five books of the Old Testament), which will attempt to find a mathematical function for skipping so many letters and moving back so many letters, which will hopefully show that the phrase "Hitler-Holocaust" is a reoccurring phrase. There are many problems with this methodology:

1. With the help of super mathematical functions one can find, or fabricate, a message in virtually any text.
2. It is significantly easier to find reoccurring phrases in the Old Testament because there are no vowels in the Hebrew. This allows those who are conducting searches to "fill in the blanks" with whatever vowels make for the best results.

   For example, much has been made of the Bible code which apparently foretold the assassination of the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The code apparently read, "Rabin Bang Bang." Now apart from the fact that this is a rather imprecise way to foretell an assassination, we must also note that the Hebrew letter combination would have simply been "rbnbnbn" (*resh bet nun bet nun bet nun*).

   The "code analyst" first must take the liberty of splitting up the letters to make the word/names he was looking for. Then, he conveniently adds an a and an i to the first word making "Rabin," and two a's into the last two words making "bang bang." (Hebrew doesn't have special characters for vowels.) This leads us to the third problem . . .
3. Those who conduct Bible codes often search for English phrases in the Hebrew Bible. You will note that somehow in the last example we derived "bang bang" from the consonants bnbn. To make things worse there is no -ng sound (as in "bang") in the Hebrew language. Once again, the "code analyst" had to fudge things a little bit, and translate a Hebrew n (nun) as an English "ng."

I hope this helps you understand why we are generally unimpressed with the "Bible Codes."

-the Theology Response Team

GETPLUGGED IN
Make friends. Study the Bible. Join the Mission.
MARS HILL COMMUNITY GROUPS
To find a group near you,
email: community@marshillchurch.org
MARS HILL CHURCH

Vintage Saints

Mary

By Pastor Mark Driscoll,
research by Deacon Crystal Griffin

Each May it seems curious to me that many Protestant Christians do not focus on Jesus' mother, Mary, in conjunction with the celebration of Mother's Day. This may be, in part, an overreaction to the improper emphasis upon and false teachings about Mary among many Catholic and Orthodox Christians.

In the second century, Irenaeus depicted Mary as a "second Eve," laying a foundation upon which later theologians would build an unbiblical view of Mary, including Cardinal Newman who rediscovered the image in the nineteenth century. Also, in the second century, the baptismal creed began referring to Jesus as "Born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary." By the fourth century, some churches were being dedicated to Mary. In the fifth century, the Council of Ephesus declared Mary the "mother of God," which further encouraged devotion to Mary. In the eighth century, Germanus of Constantinople said that Mary dispenses grace to the church on earth, and also taught, along with others, that Mary was *Mediatrix*, meaning that she participated in saving people along with Jesus.

In the twelfth century, Bernard of Clairvaux helped to popularize the idea that Mary dispenses grace to Christians, and the "Hail Mary" prayer was introduced and combined with the Rosary. In the fourteenth century, the title *Coredemptrix* first appeared in Catholic literature, speaking of Mary as participating with Jesus in our redemption (this concept continued gaining popularity and in more recent times the late Pope John Paul II spoke of it on multiple occasions).

In the fifteenth century, Pope Sixtus IV spoke of the spiritual motherhood of Mary over all Christians and the "Hail Mary" prayer was changed to its current form. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, shrines dedicated to Mary appeared in places such as Lourdes, France, and Fatima, Portugal. In the twentieth century, Pope Pius XII declared that Mary ascended into heaven like Jesus, called for the memorial of Mary's role as queen dispensing grace to Christians, and said that she was so united with Jesus that she was involved in His suffering and our salvation. The Catholic Church also held a congress on Mary and sponsored pilgrimages to some of the shrines dedicated to Mary.

Having been raised as a Catholic, I did pray to Mary as a young boy. Once I met Jesus at the age of nineteen, though, I was convicted that I had sinned against God by praying to anyone but Him. In some ways I then overreacted for a few years and did not esteem Mary as I should have. Sadly, it seems that many Christians are also prone to the extremes of either esteeming Mary too much or esteeming her too little.

The key to undoing all of the false teaching surrounding Mary is, of course, to simply look at what Scripture does say about her and add nothing to that. Mary appears by name in three of the four gospels (the Gospel of John refers to "Jesus' mother") and the book of Acts. She was a young virgin girl, perhaps even a young teenager, in fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14.

> "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior"
> – Mary worshipping God in Luke 1:46–47

Scripture gives scant insights into the early life of Mary. She grew up in Nazareth and was betrothed to be married to a carpenter named Joseph. During her engagement, the angel Gabriel appeared to her to declare that she would give birth to Jesus by a miracle of God the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). Following this announcement she traveled some one hundred miles to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who was from the family line of Aaron (Luke 1:36). Upon entering Elizabeth's home, she broke into a hymn of thanks to God (Luke 1:46–56), which has come to be known as the *Magnificat*. Mary later returned home and her fiancé, Joseph, was intending to end their relationship because he believed she had been sexually unfaithful to him. But God intervened and told Joseph in a dream all that He was doing (Matthew 1:18–25). Some months later the couple was required to travel about eighty or ninety miles to Bethlehem to register for a government census. Mary's son was born there in humble circumstances (Luke 2:6–7), in fulfillment of Micah 5:2. He was named Jesus in accordance with an angel's requirement (Matthew 1:21).

The family would later flee to Egypt to save the life of young Jesus and then they returned to Nazareth. Around perhaps the age of twelve, Jesus went to Jerusalem and was noted by the teachers for His theological insights (Luke 2:41–52). Jesus performed His first miracle at the request of Mary at a wedding in Cana (John 2:1–11). Mary is scarcely mentioned again in the gospels until she appears at the crucifixion of Jesus, where He spoke to her lovingly just before His death (John 19:26–27). Following Jesus' death, Mary then appears with the group of 120 early Christians who gathered in the Upper Room (Acts 1:12–26). She does not appear in Scripture again and her death is not mentioned in Scripture.

Mary was simply a very godly young woman who loved the Lord and trusted in Him despite great risk to her own reputation. She repeatedly appears as a devout woman who loved God and was a loving mother to Jesus. Contrary to some aberrant teaching, she did not remain a virgin, but mothered other sons such as James and Jude, who visited Jesus with Mary during His ministry (Matthew 12:46; Mark 3:31–35; Luke 8:19–21) and later became pastors who penned books of the New Testament bearing their names.

Therefore, the Mary of Scripture greatly differs from the Mary of myth, legend, and folklore. The real Mary is a wonderful example for young women to love God and retain their virginity until marriage as a demonstration of their love for God. The real Mary is a wonderful example for mothers of a godly woman who is best known for the sons she raised, whom God used to change the world, thereby elevating the ministry of Christian motherhood. The real Mary is a wonderful example for all women of what it truly means to trust God in all things, obey God even when His call is difficult, worship God in faith that He is good for His promises, fellowship with God's people in the church, and love God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Community Groups take place in the homes of church members who are committed to sharing their lives with those who participate in their group. Each groups strives to provide a warm environment with opportunities for people to establish and cultivate authentic relationships with God and with brothers and sisters in Christ. Through learning and accountabililty, Community Groups exist to develop mature Christians who will go out into their various social networks carrying the hope of the Gospel.

Introducing the Newest Mars Hill Community Groups

Ballard Tuesday 7pm
Led By: Michael Blazer, Lisa Krohn
Contact: Lisa Krohn
Phone: 206-390-6964
Email: lisa.k.krohn@gmail.com

Ballard Tuesday 7pm
Led By: Jeremy Allen
Contact: Jeremy Allen
Phone: 206-851-4330
Email: jeremy@youthexcellence.org

Bothell Tuesday 6:30pm
Led By: Sam Barrett
Contact: Sam and Beth Barrett
Phone: 425-398-9490
Email: samandbethbarrett@yahoo.com

Bothell Thursday 7pm
Led By: Tim Reber
Contact: Mary Reber
Phone: 425.670.0848
Email: mary@rebecsolutions.com

Edmonds Tuesday 6:40pm
Led By: Mike Garcia
Contact: Mike Garcia
Phone: 206-226-2546
Email: mikeyg2112@hotmail.com

Greenlake Thursday 7pm
Led By: Brent Williams
Contact: Aaron Webb
Phone: 206-484-4674
Email: beowulf47@comcast.net

Greenlake Monday 7pm
Led By: Preston McGee
Contact: Preston McGee
Phone: 206-427-4504
Email: preston@marshillchurch.org

Greenwood Monday 7:45pm
Led By: Caleb Davis
Contact: Caleb Davis
Phone: 206-297-6164
Email: davisc@spu.edu

Kirkland Tuesday 7:30pm
Led By: Colin Jones
Contact: Colin Jones
Phone: 425-823-7923
Email: colin@maverickinvestments.net

Kirkland Tuesday 7pm
Led By: Tim Saint
Contact: Laurie Saint
Phone: 206-941-8359
Email: tim@saintfamily.com

Lynnwood Sunday 6:30pm
Led By: Donald L. Churchill
Contact: Don Churchill
Phone: 425-745-0264
Email: laurcon23@yahoo.com

Magnolia Tuesday 7:30pm
Led By: Zack Hubert
Contact: Julie Hubert
Phone: 206-355-5941
Email: julieahubert@gmail.com

Northgate Thursday 7:30pm
Led By: Mike Hanson
Contact: Todd Christenson
Phone: 206-650-1779
Email: tachris4jc@yahoo.com

North Seattle Saturday 4:30pm
Led By: Roger Friend
Contact: Brooke Friend
Phone: 206-364-5353
Email: sixfriends@netzero.net

North Seattle Tuesday 10am
Led By: Trish Mahoney
Contact: Trish Mahoney
Email: trish@themahoney.com
For Women Only

Queen Anne Saturday 10:30am
Led By: Charlie Musser, Kaitlin Omundson
Contact: Kaitlin Omundson
Phone: 407-625-8832
Email: musses@spu.edu

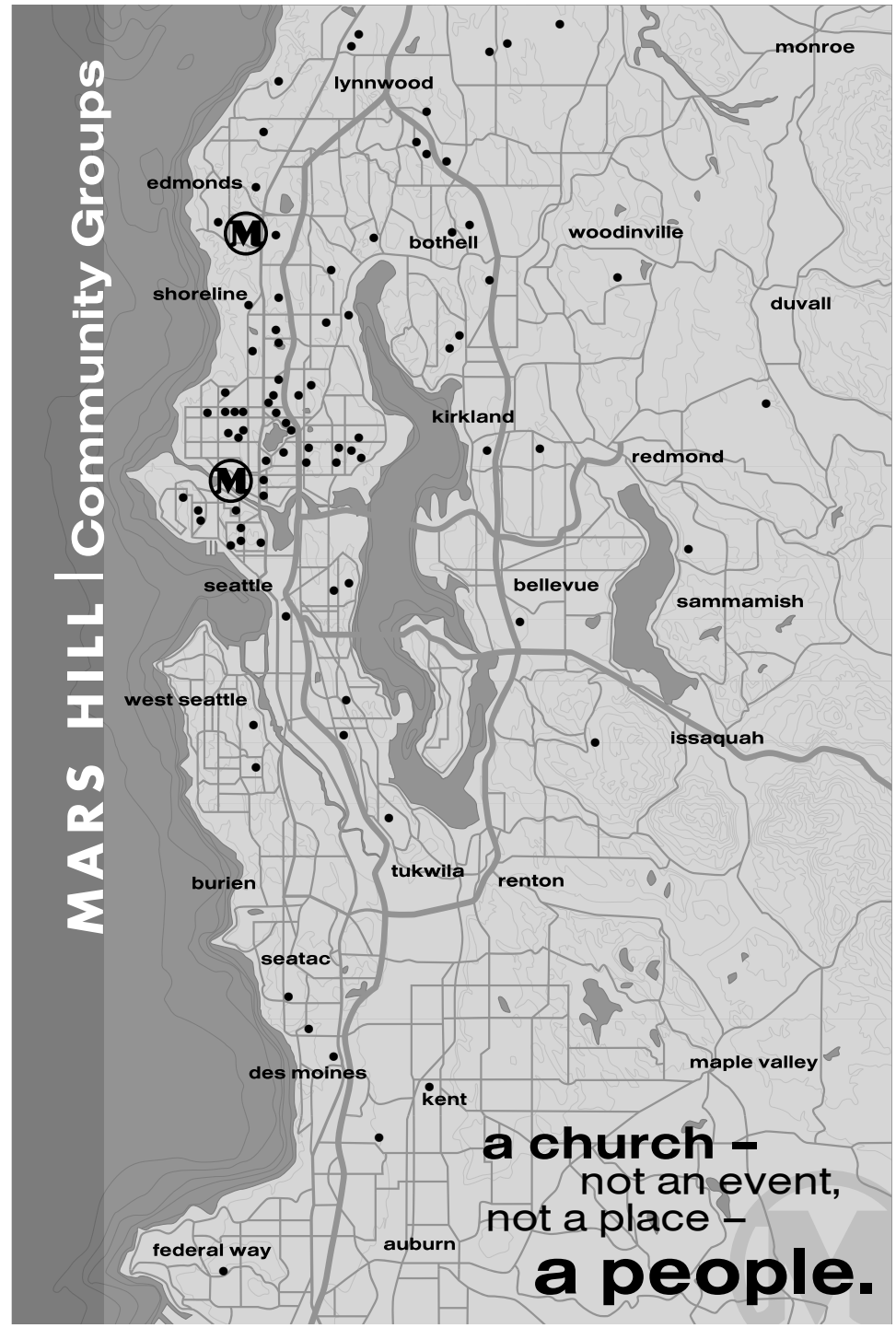
Phinney Ridge Thursday 7pm
Led By: Peter Bell
Contact: Stephen Papineau
Phone: 360-540-0878
Email: papineau@seattleedu.org

Ravenna Tuesday 7pm
Led By: Nate Nelson
Contact: Nate Nelson
Phone: 206-321-2216
Email: chrisandnatenelson@hotmail.com

Sand Point Tuesday 7pm
Led By: Bret Niemann
Contact: Bret and Christine Niemann
Phone: 206-525-5541
Email: christineanne78@yahoo.com

West Seattle Tuesday 6:30pm
Led By: Scott Willhite
Contact: Scott and Allison Willhite
Phone: 206-251-1898
Email: scott@alkihomes.com

more than one hundred
mars hill community groups
gather weekly around the Puget Sound region
to join one near you email
community@marshillchurch.org



BODYLIFE

Column of Opportunity & Information

Here are some specific needs and announcements for the month of May. For more about getting involved at Mars Hill, email life@marshillchurch.org, or show up 40 minutes before any Sunday service.

Summer Sunday Service Schedule

Service times are changing again at Mars Hill. Beginning June 4th, Ballard will meet at 9am, 11am, 5pm, and 7pm. Shoreline will gather once a Sunday, at 10:30am.

Live Sound & Audio Recording

Love that music but can't play a lick? We need your help making Mars Hill rock the block. Come turn knobs and slide faders in Jesus' name, e-mail nate@marshillchurch.org.

Or, are you the audio perfectionist always wishing things sounded a little better? Come nurture your ears in our recording studio. Volunteers for audio recording and post production, e-mail bjohnson@marshillchurch.org.

Dinner anyone?

The Covenant ministry is currently looking for married Mars Hill members to host dinners for some single folks, four to six people over for dinner. For you Mars Hill singles out there, if you'd like to hang out, eat good food, and meet new friends, go directly to the Members' Site "Covenant" forum and find out how to sign up. Questions, comments, ideas...email covenant@marshillchurch.org and visit us on the members site forums for event info.

Third Annual Farm League Tournament

Saturday, June 24th at Marymoor Park

On Saturday, June 24, from 9-5pm, Mars Hill will host the third annual Farm League Softball Tournament and BBQ at the Marymoor Park in Redmond. This is a great opportunity to have fun playing softball while supporting the Agathos Foundation's Mars Hill Farm.

The entry fee is $15 per player, which will be used to cover the cost of renting the fields and the food for the BBQ. All additional money will be donated to the Agathos Foundation. This tournament will raise funds for the cost of purchasing the first farm: Mars Hill Farm.

The Agathos Foundation is a not-for-profit organization that adopts and educates children who have been orphaned by the AIDS crisis in Africa. The Agathos Foundation wants your help to buy a working farm in South Africa with the intention of making it self-sufficient, thereby being good stewards with the money invested.

What do Da Vinci, wicca, and the Apostle Paul have in common?

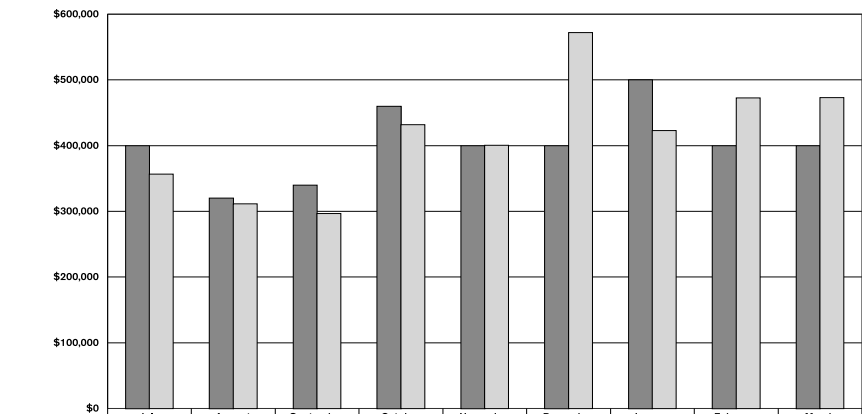
6:45pm, Mars Hill Ballard

Wednesdays this June, the Capstone Institute is offering a free lecture series featuring four lessons by three different speakers. Topics include *The Da Vinci Code*, wicca, New Age spirituality, and new perspectives on Paul. Come one come all.

CHURCH FINANCIAL INFORMATION/WEEKLY GIVING TRENDS

Date	Budget	Giving	# of Givers	Attendance
March 12	$100,000	$135,138	436	4402
March 19	$100,000	$107,099	474	4231
March 26	$100,000	$106,690	509	4151
April 2	$100,000	$107,669	446	4208
April 9	$100,000	$127,189	516	2266
April 15 - Good Friday		$6697	36	4402
April 16 - Easter	$100,000	$92,604	435	5241

MONTHLY BUDGET VS. ACTUAL GIVING



	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
Monthly Budget	$400,000	$320,000	$340,000	$460,000	$400,000	$400,000	$500,000	$400,000	$400,000
Actual Given	$356,517	$311,373	$296,416	$431,446	$400,088	$571,587	$422,613	$472,580	$472,839

**These are budgeted giving numbers. They don't represent actual surplus or deficit.*

GIVING TRENDS

(July 1, 2005–April 16, 2006)

Total Given	$4,060,404
Households	2845
Average Giving	$149/month per household

EXPAND CAMPAIGN

Due to a growing church body and limitations with meeting space, we have purchased a new facility one block north at 1401 NW 50th, started another MH site in Shoreline, and are planning a variety of growth options. We need to raise at least 3 million dollars this year – for full details check out the Expansion information at www.marshillchurch.org

Needed funds	**$3,000,000**
Raised to date	**$1,841,045**
Number of Giving Households	**1,109**
Total Needed to be Raised	**$1,158,955**

Money at Mars Hill

What do we believe about our stuff?

Very simply, everything we have comes from God. Our money is a blessing and a tool we use to worship Him by giving to the church (to further the Gospel in Seattle), providing for our families and enjoying God and the grace that He gives us. You may have a lot and you may have a little, but the real question is: are you worshipping God with your stuff and do the first fruits of your checkbook reveal that?

How much should I give?

The Bible says that giving is for Christians and should be directed first to your local church. The bible does not say how much you should give but rather seeks to deal with the heart behind your giving. 2nd Corinthians 8 and 9 say that our giving should be cheerful, regular, sacrificial and generous. The Bible does not prescribe a percentage; through prayer we must seek to have a clear conscience in regards to our giving. Jesus says, *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"* (Mt 6:21).

Who should give?

Christians should give faithfully to their local church. If you are not a Christian, don't give–seek to deal with the larger issue: your sin and Jesus' forgiveness of that sin. We are not concerned about the amount people give but about the number of people who are giving. God is building His kingdom through the church, and He asks that all believers share in this joyous responsibility. This mission is bigger than just a few of us and takes everyone's effort and faithfulness; no matter if you are a college student who can give only 10 bucks a month or a millionaire who can give thousands.

How Can I Give At Mars Hill?

- By check or cash placed in the offering basket during service
- By check or cash placed In the triangular kiosks located in the foyers
- By mailing a check to the church office (contact the office if you would like some self addressed envelopes).
- Online contributions can be given via debit or credit card at **www.marshillchurch.org**.
- Automatic Payments (ACH) can also be set up - email **giving@marshillchurch.org**
- Donation of stock

Sincerely, Pastor Jamie Munson

Questions, Comments, or Concerns,
e-mail: **giving@marshillchurch.org**

TELL YOUR STORY

Your story < **The story of Mars Hill** < **The story of the Gospel**

Thousands at Mars Hill can tell how Jesus saved their lives. Altogether, these stories compose the narrative of our church. Help us tell the ongoing story of Mars Hill by telling us the ongoing story of God's grace in your life.

Email story@marshillchurch.org for more information.